Delegations will find attached an information note from the Commission on the above subject which has been put on the provisional agenda, under "other business", for the forthcoming Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting on 14 February 2008.
ANNEX

Education, Youth and Culture Council 14 February 2008
Information Note from the Commission
EuroSkills 2008 (Rotterdam)

EuroSkills, the first ever Europe-wide skills competition will be held in Rotterdam, Netherlands, on 18th - 20th September 2008. The event is being organised by a newly established association, European Skills Promotion Organisation (ESPO), in cooperation with Skills Netherlands. The European Commission is supporting the organisation of the event through the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Around 40 disciplines in 6 main skills domains (Creative Arts and Fashion, ICT, Manufacturing and Engineering, Construction and Building, Transportation and Logistics, Social, Personal and Hospitality Services) will be included in the 2008 competition, chosen because of their importance for Europe, its economic growth and competitiveness. The national selections and enrolment of candidates were launched at the end of 2007 and will continue until April 2008. The organisers have already started to work on a Europe-wide publicity campaign and promotional activities. ESPO is assisting its members in different European countries with the development of national skills competitions.

The organisation of the competition fits very well with the common objectives of the Copenhagen process on European cooperation in vocational education and training. EuroSkills provides a unique opportunity to raise the image, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET) systems, by creating a platform to demonstrate, test, compare and improve general skills and competence level of the future labour force. It will bring together all the relevant stakeholders, help to establish links and partnerships between organisations active in the VET field and so contribute to the creation of mutual trust between Member States' VET systems. This is crucial at a time when the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is being launched throughout the EU.

During the event, a forum for sharing of ideas and meeting with other people – EuroSkills Village - will be organised. This occasion will be used for the presentation of policy developments such as the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and EQF, and different skills forecasting initiatives linked to the Council Resolution "New skills for new jobs" adopted in November of the last year.
The Commission believes that EuroSkills 2008 will be the starting point of a new tradition in the promotion of vocational skills and vocational education and training in Europe. Therefore it is expected that EuroSkills will be continued as a regular event to be hosted by a different European country every two years.

Member States which are not yet involved in the organisation of the event are invited to contact the national organisations active in the field of skills development, to encourage them to become involved in the EuroSkills competitions as soon as possible. More information is available on the official EuroSkills website http://www.EuroSkills2008.com.